

Final Market Squid Fishery Management Plan

Executive Summary

The Final Market Squid Fishery Management Plan (MSFMP) is presented in four sections. Section 1 presents background on the California market squid fishery as well as the MSFMP Project. Section 2 includes the environmental documentation (see California Code of Regulations Title 14 §15250-15253). This includes a review of alternatives and options presented to the Fish and Game Commission (Commission) during the adoption process. The environmental document was certified by the Commission as meeting California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirements at its 27 August 2004 meeting. Section 3 includes the regulations that will implement the MSFMP Project's management strategy. Section 4 includes public comments and Fish and Game Department (Department) responses received during the adoption process.

The market squid (*Loligo opalescens*) fishery is one of the most important in the State of California in terms of landings and revenue. The fishery generates millions of dollars to the state annually from domestic and foreign sales. In addition to supporting the commercial fishery, the market squid resource is an important forage item for seabirds, marine mammals, and other fish taken for commercial and recreational purposes. It is also used by the recreational fishery as bait.

In 1997, the Legislature approved Senate Bill (SB) 364 (Sher), Chapter 785, Statutes of 1997, which established a moratorium on new vessels entering California's commercial market squid fishery. The initial three-year moratorium placed a cap on the number of vessels in the squid fishery, established a \$2,500 permit fee to fund a Department study of the fishery, and provided the Commission with interim regulatory authority over the fishery for the duration of the moratorium. As part of this process, a Squid Fishery Advisory Committee, made up of resource stakeholders, and a Squid Research Scientific Committee, consisting of many of the world's leading squid fishery scientists, were established to advise the Director of the Department (Director) on recommendations for squid conservation and management and to provide input on the development of research protocols.

In 2001, the Legislature approved SB 209 (Sher), Chapter 318, Statutes of 2001, which established permanent management authority of the market squid fishery to the Commission. The statutes also require the Commission to manage the squid fishery under the guidelines set forth by the Marine Life Management Act (MLMA).

The goals of the MSFMP are to manage the market squid resource to ensure long term resource conservation and sustainability, and to develop a framework for management



that will be responsive to environmental and socioeconomic changes. The MSFMP establishes the management program for California's market squid fishery and procedures by which the Commission will manage the market squid resource.

Market squid fishery management, as described in Chapter 3, is based on four management components: 1) fishery control rules, 2) a restricted access program, 3) environmental considerations including a seasonal closure area for seabirds and 4) administrative items. The final project and the implementing regulations adopted by the Commission at the 27 August 2004 and 3 December 2004 meetings include:

Fishery Control Rules

- Establish a seasonal catch limitation of 118,000 tons;
- Continue existing closures from noon Friday to noon Sunday from the U.S.-Mexico border to the California-Oregon border;
- Continue existing squid monitoring programs (port sampling and logbooks);
- Continue existing regulations that do not require a squid permit when fishing for live bait or incidental take of two tons or less;
- Maintain existing wattage requirements (maximum of 30,000 watts) and modify shielding requirements that the lower edges of the shields shall be parallel to the deck of the vessel;

Restricted Access Program

- Establish a vessel-based capacity goal for the market squid fishery that produces a moderately productive and specialized fleet (55 vessels and 34 light boats, 18 brail vessels);
- Initial Issuance of Permits:
 - Transferable vessel permits - possession of a current market squid vessel permit (2004-2005) and a minimum of 50 landings in a window period (January 1, 2000 through March 31, 2003);
 - Transferable brail permits - possession of a current market squid vessel permit (2004-2005) and a minimum of 10 landings made with brail gear in a window period (January 1, 2000 through March 31, 2003);
 - Transferable light boat permits - possession of a current market squid permit (either vessel or light for 2004-2005) and have submitted one light boat log by December 31, 2000;
 - Non-transferable vessel permits - possession of a current market squid vessel permit (2004-2005), possessed a California commercial fishing license for at least 20 years and made a minimum of 33 squid landings at any time prior to August 27, 2004;
 - Non-transferable brail permits - possession of a current market squid vessel permit (2004-2005), possessed a California commercial fishing license for at least 20 years and made a minimum of 10 landings with brail gear during one fishing season in a window period (January 1, 2000 through March 31, 2003);
- Establish annual permit fees at:
 - Transferable Market Squid Vessel Permit: \$2000;
 - Non-transferable Market Squid Vessel Permit: \$1000;



- Transferable Market Squid Brail Permit: \$2000;
- Non-transferable Market Squid Brail Permit: \$1000;
- Transferable Light Boat Permit: \$600;
- Establish full transferability of market squid vessel permits based on comparable capacity (within 10%); establish transferability of market squid vessel permits to a vessel of larger capacity under a “2 for 1” permit retirement;
- Establish full transferability of market squid brail permits based on comparable capacity;
- Establish full transferability of light boat permits and establish an upgrade from a light boat permit to a transferable brail permit on a “1 for 1” permit retirement;
- Set the transfer fee at \$500, and an upgrade fee of \$1500;
- Establish 3 experimental non-transferable market squid vessel permits;

Ecological Concerns

- Seasonal Closures for Seabirds: Squid may not be taken using attracting lights in all waters of the Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary at any time;

Administrative Items

- The Director may establish one advisory committee for the squid fishery, which includes scientific, environmental and industry representatives.

The MSFMP utilizes a framework composed of several elements that will allow the Commission to react quickly to changes in the market squid population off California without the need for a full amendment and provides the Commission specific guidelines for making management decisions. These guidelines will allow for other management strategies, should they become necessary, which would effectively achieve the goals and objectives of the MSFMP and MLMA. Since market squid is included in the Federal Coastal Pelagic Species Fishery Management Plan (CPS FMP) as a monitored species, the MSFMP framework structure is consistent with management by the Pacific Fishery Management Council outlined in the CPS FMP.

